

Acton Historic District Commission
Meeting June 28, 2011
Minutes

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Kathy Acerbo-Bachman.

Also present were Ron Rose (RR), David Honn (DH), Anita Rogers (AR), Pamela Lynn (PL), and David Barrat (DB)

6:02 Goal Settings: Each member was asked to list his or her goals for the HDC for the ensuing year and beyond.

DB Three goals 1.) A line item budget for HDC. The town had maintained a line item budget for HDC \$600. This was changed just a few years ago. 2.) A crash course for non-architects on the commission. 3.) Finally establish a procedure so that the building inspector, by-law enforcement officer and town planning director will consistently refer anyone living in any of the historic districts who wants to alter the exterior of his/her building, dwelling, office building or other to the HDC for guidance and approval of plans for the alteration before submitting the plan to any other applicable committee or department.

DH 1.) Have more communication and cooperation with the Design Review Board and other commissions and departments to prepare a warrant article for town meeting seeking preservation and retention of stone walls, prohibition of clear-cutting and other activities detrimental to the character of the town. Have the DRB organize a combined effort of all the committees, commissions, and boards such as the Historic Commission, Economic Development Committee and others to draft an article to be included in the Annual Town Meeting for 2012; 2.) Enumerate appropriate properties on a cultural reserve list to be protected from destruction. 3.) Create historic districts at large for any size district which would include stand-alone properties, single or multiple residences to be protected.

PL Create a tutorial to get people to work on sign restrictions. Attempt to change perception of HDC's function. Have a booth at the Farmers' Market for public relations. Hold more walks, tours and other events sponsored by HDC.

AR Consolidate the documentation, by-laws, rules and regulations from whatever source to make sign regulation more consistent and even overlap to achieve more harmony between various agencies that regulate signs. Create a more user-friendly environment for businesses who depend on signs.

RR Budget for administrative staff. Greater support from Board of Selectmen. Publish P/R articles concerning certain older buildings. Have a budget large enough to have an impact. Greater political support. Hold educational events to improve perceptions such as the program on windows.

AR Have contractors like Paul Eisenkamp to hold lectures/workshops on insulating 1800's building like the Acton Women's Club in 2011. Examine structure behind walls, open walls. Do this with the Asa Parlin house.

RR There needs to be support for education. Refer to Greening of the Historic Home. A hands on workshop in concert with utility companies and Mass. Historic Commission. Do a workshop on demolition by neglect. RR what are other HDCs doing that preserves assets or has empowered their HDCs to enforce a standard and to avoid or prevent things like residential compounds to subdivide some lots into several smaller lots. HDC should send somebody to the BoS to educate and communicate strategy, to convince Roland and Steve Ledoux now let us know about staff way in advance.

AR Budget several contractors to create a nice brochure like Arlington has. Create a calendar. Hold more workshops.

KAB Have admin. staff with a budget supporting 15 hours per week for admin. Having a budget is key. Need investment for repairs with minimum maintenance by-law improvement key to systemic change. Need some big boost; create a way to invest money in them. No plans to maintain older houses from deterioration. Have DRB be mandatory like Lexington does for areas outside historic districts. Massive tree plantings in streets. There is no budget to replant trees that were removed. Restore tree canopy.

Goals Charted out:

<u>Town Support</u>	<u>P/R-Education</u>	<u>Develop Competence</u>	<u>Legislative Programs</u>
Budget Admin. Supt. Staff Prof. Staff Supt. Interaction with other boards	Walking Tours Workshops Calendar Simplify Documents Communicate ac- tivity documents Info. Mtls. For HDC Members	Information packets Circuit Riders	Expand Existing districts Single property districts Minimum Maint. By-laws Low/no cost maintenance loans Landscaping maintenance

Recess to 7:25

Meeting resumed at 7:25

Regarding BoS appointments and disbanding of committees: Case in point; the Bos disbanded the Outdoor Lighting Committee. The BoS can do that. However, the BoS cannot summarily disband the HDC. There needs to be a 2/3 majority at town meeting to disband the HDC. Members are appointed by the BoS and individual members can be "unappointed." There must be at least four members including an architect and realtor. An attorney is also recommended as board member. Other members should possess appropriate qualifications. If decisions are challenged, MHC decides the matter. Town counsel would have to approve an at-will dismissal of an individual member. RR Can individuals be dismissed at will? KAB Yes, but the BoS has to vote on the matter.

Public hearing Procedures regarding 81 School Street: The Chair of HDC or next in authority if the chair must be recused, calls the public hearing to order; Chair reads the public notice from the Beacon or other publication of general circulation in the area; Chair lays down ground rules regarding the

1127 Application aid walk un through Steeple asphalt roof replace galvanized metal. Light in steeple repair get back to what was there and justification chimney removed not a part of the original structure. Unsightly flashing. More historic lights with cut sheets to be submitted 1870's fixtures larger in front of building and small on the side.

Doors Wood 4-panel. Need to amend 1127 number the pages last transfer from #1126 to 1127 and get restamped.

#1126 parts removed that are not a part of the work in that application go to 1127. 1126 is a CNA. 1127 needs a Certificate of Appropriateness, public hearing. T-III will be billed for the public notice appearing in the Beacon. This should be scheduled as soon as possible. T-iii can appear at the 7/12 meeting for guidance before the public hearing. Depends on the Beacon's schedule. 2. Consent notices before public hearing. We vote after the public hearing is closed. What time in 7/12/11 will be scheduled?

South Acton Train Station: the 60% Plan was reviewed with DH and RR who attended the last meting with the T. Plans presented show the north and south sides of the station prepared for bidding. On the south side the platform is 4' above grade. The structure will have a 60' canopy. The north side will also have a 60' canopy. The front of the north side head house has a more generous panel area. The parking area will be reconfigured for handicapped. There will be a loss of 4-6 parking spaces. The T integrated suggestions from HDC. Acton asked for enhanced landscaping. The T's landscaping budget is skimpy. They will use precut panels. On the north side the roof has been stepped. Unsure when the next meeting with the T is.


West Acton Train crossing. The T proposes to use a signaling system including a large cantilevered structure 18' tall to be see 400' feet away. This is not what West Concord has. We need to measure off how far 400' is from the tracks. Propose using helium filled balloons at the WA crossing to measure visibility from 400' away. This is not an MBTA decision but a Mass DPW decision. MHC was not asked to review this monster. It is within their purview. KAB will call MHC and Mass DPW and discuss the matter.

Elections: KAB to be chair for another year; PL to be vice-chair and DB to continue as secretary and RR to fill in as minutes taker on occasion.

A special thanks is due to Terra Friedrichs for all of her hard work and contribution to the HDC for the past 3 years.

Meeting adjourned at 10:18

Respectfully submitted


David T. Barrat,
Secretary